Gas agencies in Punjab

4127. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of gas agencies present in Punjab, district-wise;

(b) whether Government propose to set up more gas agencies in the State;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) by when it is likely to be set up ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR) : (a) As on 1.4.2003, Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) were operating 399 LPG distributorships in various districts of the State of Punjab.

(b) to (d) Consequent upon the dismantling of Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM), OMCs are free to set up the LPG distributorships as per their commercial considerations in all the States.

Purchase of oil from international market

4128. SHRI SURESH KALMADI : Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is wise to keep importing oil while it is still cheap having the fact in mind that if the US-Iraq war stretches long the oil prices in international market could sky rocket; and

(b) if so, the details of oil purchase by Government from the international market in the last six months?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR) : (a) and (b) The oil prices in the international market have come down after USA attacked Iraq in March, 2003. During the period from September, 2002 to March, 2003, about 40.3 million metric tonnes of crude oil, valued at about Rs. 38,900 crore was imported in the country.